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EARLY HISTORY

OF THE

NASHVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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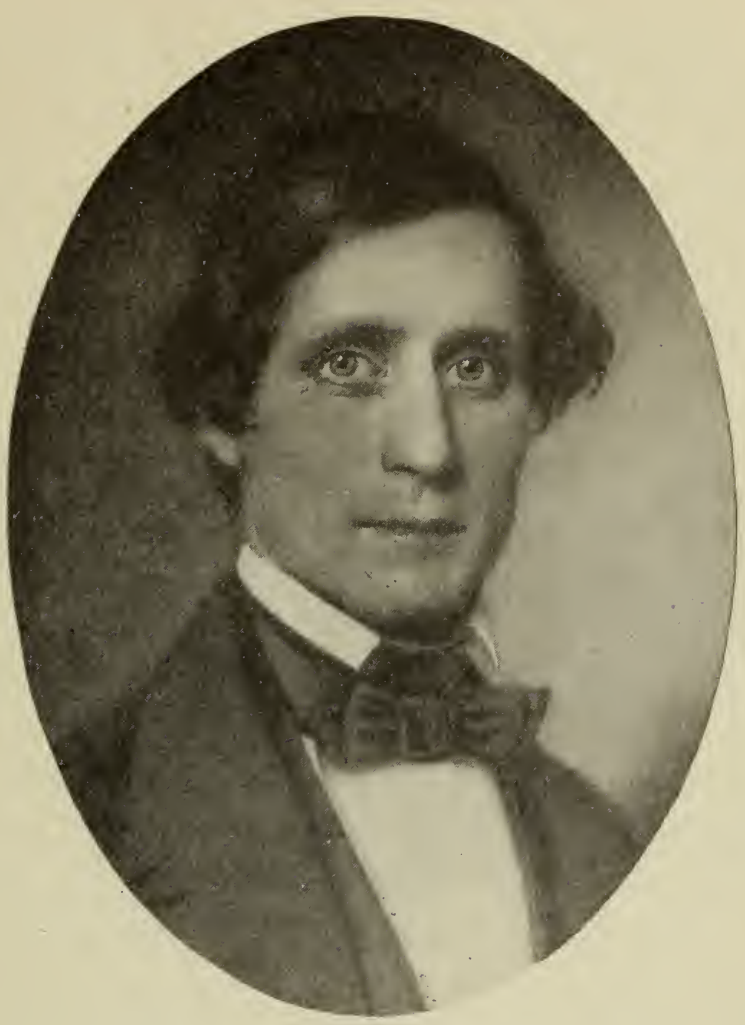

PROF. ALFRED HUME,
1808—1853.

Prof. Alfred Hume

"On some faces there is only a date, on others a history."

"His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him, that Nature might stand up and say to all the world, 'This was a man'."

"He was a patriot, exerting himself in behalf of all the children of his native city. Himself a teacher in his own private school, the slab that marks his grave in the old city cemetery bears the eloquent inscription: 'The Father of the public school system of Nashville'. It is a far cry from his little school house on Vine Street to this beautiful and commodious structure being erected here. I can wish nothing better for the new than there may rest upon it throughout all coming years the spirit of the old, the spirit of gentleness and firmness, of sympathy and truth, of strong and virile manhood. While every inch a man, there was about him the tenderness of a woman. And so I love to think of him associated with this fair land of Dixie beneath whose bosom his body sleeps. I love to think of his influence as of some exquisite flower that lived and grew among you and exhaled sweet fragrance all about, a flower that bloomed in rarest beauty here, and in dying, shed its blossoms lavishly, lovingly, gently around you and dropped a seed in every heart."

(Concluding sentences of the address of Dr. Alfred Hume, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, upon the occasion of the laying of the corner stone of the Hume-Fogg High School Building).

Foreword

Nashville, Tenn., Oct. 16, 1921.

This pamphlet is printed in order that the present and future citizens of Nashville may be correctly informed regarding the early steps taken in the establishment of the Nashville Public School System.

I esteem it a great honor and at the same time a great privilege to have been permitted to serve for many years past as a member of the Nashville Board of Education, and it is my sincere hope that the Board will continue at all times to avoid political entanglements and to look only to the best interests of the children who attend the schools, bearing in mind that they are to be the future citizens of Nashville.

I am thankful that I was privileged to offer the resolution which was adopted by unanimous vote of the Board, authorizing and requiring the reading of selected portions of the Holy Bible daily in each class room and study hall in all the public school buildings of the City, for it is my belief that the best interests of the children and of the community require religious, but not sectarian, instruction in our schools.

The following statement was made, and resolution follows:

Mr. President and Other Members of the Board of Education of the city of Nashville:

I wish to offer a resolution which has for its purpose and aim the endorsement of a bill which has been introduced into the Legislature requiring Bible reading in the public schools over the State of Tennessee. I can not understand the logic of those who oppose the reading of the Holy Bible in our schools, provided it is done without sectarian comment.

Some who raise objection undertake to do so upon the grounds that the Constitution of the United States guarantees to every person entire freedom of religious belief, and the right to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, and I grant you that this is true, and that it should be so, but surely an intelligent knowledge of the Holy Bible which "teaches what man is to believe concerning God and what duties God requires of man," is not violative of the intent or purpose of the Constitution either of the great State of Tennessee or of our United States, for *both contemplate the worship of God.*

Article I, Section III, of the State of Tennessee, reads in part as follows:

"That all men have a natural and indefeasible right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their conscience."

which section clearly contemplates the worship of Almighty God.

We must all admit that a knowledge of God must precede His worship, and that to have an intelligent knowledge, every youth must receive instruction, either at home or in the school-room,—preferable in both places.

This should not be a sectarian question. Almighty God, the Maker of the universe, is greater than any party, greater than any creed.

Cardinal Gibbons, of the Catholic Church, is on record as follows:

"The intellectual and moral growth of our children should go hand in hand; otherwise, their education is shallow and fragmentary, and often proves a curse instead of a blessing. Piety is not to be put on like a holiday dress, to be worn on state occasions, but it is to be exhibited in our conduct at all times. Our youth must put in practice every day the commandments of God, as well as the rules of grammar and arithmetic. How can they familiarize themselves with these sacred duties if they are not daily inculcated?"

In the earlier days of our public school life,—in the days when I was privileged to attend these schools, it was the custom not only to have Bible reading daily, but to call upon a certain number of the children each day in ro-

tation to repeat passages of the Scripture from their own selection, and many of the proverbs and other passages from the Bible that I remember clearest and best are these that I learned at that time.

Outside of the question of religion, there is no book that can compare with the Bible in its historical accuracy, its philosophy, its astronomy, its poetry, its drama, its proverbs, its laws which have been adopted and incorporated by the civilized nations of the world. The teachings of the Bible are as applicable to the things of today as to the days that have now passed into ancient history. What parent could object to his child learning by memory thousands of selected passages from the Scriptures? What more beautiful or more true than the first Psalm, or the twenty-third Psalm? What novel more interesting than the life of Joseph and his brethren, or David, or Solomon, or Sampson, or Ruth and Naomi, or the history of the Hebrew race, the heroic age of the Judges, King Saul's relations with Jonathan and David, Absolom's rebellion, Elijah's brave words and wonderful deeds?

I think that the Act passed by the Legislature of Pennsylvania and approved May 20, 1913, reading as follows, is perhaps the best enactment on the question of Bible readings in the public schools that has been passed by any State, to-wit:

"An Act regulating the reading of the Holy Bible in the public schools of this Commonwealth. Whereas, the rules and regulations governing the reading of the Holy Bible in the public schools of this Commonwealth are not uniform; and whereas it is in the interest of good moral training, of a life of honorable thought and of good citizenship that the public school children should have lessons of morality brought to their attention during their school days, therefore, Be it enacted, etc.—That at least ten verses from the Holy Bible shall be read, or caused to be read, without comment, by the teachers in charge; Provided,—That where any teacher has other teachers under and subject to direction, then the teacher exercising this authority shall read the Holy Bible, or cause it to be read, as herein directed. Section 2.—That if any school teacher, whose duty it shall be to read the Holy Bible, or cause it to be read, as directed in this Act, shall fail or omit so to

do, said school teacher shall, upon charges preferred for such failure or omission, and proof of the same before the governing board of the school district, be discharged."

and I, therefore, desire to make this motion:

"RESOLVED, That the members of the Nashville Board of Education are heartily in favor of the passage by the present legislature of a State law requiring Bible reading daily in the public schools of the State, without sectarian comment."

This pamphlet reproduces in full the report of my grandfather, Prof. Alfred Hume, and I commend the thoughtful, careful reading of the report by all those who are fortunate enough to come into possession of a copy of same.

LELAND HUME.

Early History of the Nashville Public Schools

In the spring of 1852, when the City of Nashville was considering the establishment of a Public School System, Prof. Alfred Hume, an eminent teacher of a select classical school, which was conducted in a frame building on a portion of the lot where the Hume-Fogg High School building now stands, was commissioned by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, (of which he was a member) to visit Philadelphia, New York, Boston and other Eastern cities for the purpose of investigating their public school systems.

Having returned and signified his readiness to make known the results of his inquiries, he was requested to do so in public. Accordingly, on the 26th of August, 1852, he appeared before the Board and a large concourse of citizens at the Odd Fellows Hall, and read a lengthy and masterly report, two thousand copies of which were published by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. The report was adopted and made the basis of the present public school system.

The first building was erected on the corner of Broad and Spruce Streets, and the building was named in his honor "Hume High and Grammar School." His memory has been perpetuated as the "Father of the Public School System of Nashville." He was a scholarly man, a close student, a painstaking teacher. Little wonder that his health was impaired by long hours in the school-room and that, at the age of forty-four, in the very prime of his manhood, his life was ended, but his work and his influence still live.

He was the son of Rev. Dr. William Hume of Edinburgh,

Scotland, pioneer minister and educator, whose congregation organized the First Presbyterian Church of this city.

The personnel of the first Board of Education appointed by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen was composed as follows:

Alfred Hume
F. B. Fogg
W. K. Bowling
R. J. Meigs
Allen A. Hall
John A. McEwen.

Much of the unvarying prosperity of the schools is due to the fact that they have always been controlled by Boards of active, intelligent, discreet men, many of them the most distinguished citizens of Nashville.

When Hon. Albert E. Hill was president of the Nashville Board of Education, he recommended to that body the erection of a monument in honor of Prof. Alfred Hume. This recommendation was the unanimous action of the Board, and the necessary sum of money was realized largely through the splendid co-operation and voluntary offerings of the children attending the public schools of Nashville and the monument was unveiled, with appropriate ceremonies, on July 28, 1919. The principal speaker was Dr. Alfred Hume, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mississippi, and grandson of Prof. Alfred Hume.

In the year 1856, the lot on the corner of Summer and Line Streets was purchased with the proceeds of prosperity donated by Col. Andrew Hynes, and a building erected upon it was called by his name. In the year 1859, M. H. Howard, Esq., gave to the City a fine lot on College Hill, on which now stands the school house named for him.

The Trimble School, at 524 South Market Street, was so called in honor of John Trimble, Esq., who presented the lot on which it stands for school purposes, to the then subtown of South Nashville, in the year 1851. During the next year the building was erected and a public school opened. When, in 1855, the corporate limit of the city was

extended over this territory, the City Board of Education took charge of the school.

In 1865 a lot was rented at the corner of Madison and North Cherry Streets, and an old army house purchased and removed to it. In 1872 a lot was purchased at the corner of North High and Jefferson Streets, and during the next year the Ward school house was built upon it.

In 1867 the Belle View building was purchased and converted into a school house for colored pupils.

On re-opening the schools in 1865 the Hume building was found insufficient to accommodate the pupils of that district. The city, therefore, purchased a wooden building which had been built on South Vine Street by the United States authorities as a mess-hall during the war. This house was removed to the Hume lot and fitted up as well as the character of the material would permit, and was used for school purposes until it became untenantable, and then the Fogg School building was erected on the former play-ground of the Hume School building at the corner of Broad and Spruce. These two buildings were subsequently razed and the present High School building was erected and named Hume-Fogg, in honor of Prof. Hume and Hon. Francis B. Fogg.

These two men were closely associated in the early history of Nashville, and especially in the development of her educational interests, and it is very appropriate that their names should be linked in connection with the handsomest and best equipped public school building in the entire South.

LELAND HUME.

REPORT

ON THE SUBJECT OF

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

IN THE

CITY OF NASHVILLE

MADE TO THE

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

BY ALFRED HUME

AUGUST 31, 1852

NASHVILLE:
W. F. BANG & CO., BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS, DEADERICK STREET

1852

NASHVILLE, Nov. 9, 1852.

At a Regular Meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, of the city of Nashville, the following resolution was offered by Ald. G. M. Fogg, Esq. and adopted unanimously by the Board, to wit:

Resolved. By the Mayor and Aldermen of the city of Nashville, that two thousand copies of the able and satisfactory report of Alderman Hume, upon the subject of the establishment of free schools in the city, be ordered to be published in pamphlet form.

REPORT

To the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Nashville:

GENTLEMEN:

In accordance with an order of this Board passed June 1852, I have visited the cities of Cleveland, Boston, Providence, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and examined the system of Public Schools at present in operation in those cities, and now beg leave to submit the following report.

Permit me however, before entering upon the subject, to remark that in each of the cities named, I was received with great kindness, and every facility afforded for making the investigation I wished. In Cleveland, Boston and Providence, the schools were in operation, and the opportunity was given me of visiting them when I chose, listening to the exercises of the pupils, questioning them myself, and obtaining from teachers and the managers of the schools, all the information I might desire. In Philadelphia and Baltimore, the schools were closed for the summer, and of course I had not the means of seeing the practical results of their system. Still those who had the control of them exhibited every disposition to aid me in getting a knowledge of the system as carried on in those cities, by showing their houses to me, the mode of seating, ventilating, and heating, as well as giving me their reports, their rules and regulations, and answering any questions I chose to ask in reference to their schools. The result of the investigation I now place before you.

In all these cities I find the Public Schools engage the attention, and enlist the feelings of the great majority of the citizens. They point to them with pride, as evidence

of their liberality and intelligence. They look upon them as the great engine to break down vice and immorality, and as affording most powerful aid in supporting law and good government, so that few, comparatively very few, can now be found who will dare to say one word in opposition to them. They consider the great problem of the possibility of affording a substantial education to all, indiscriminately, as now completely solved. To give the means of obtaining knowledge to all they believe to be not only practicable, but absolutely indispensable to the welfare of the community, they look upon it as a duty required of them by God the creator, and by their country. One of the strongest proofs of the excellence of these schools, and their great popularity, is to be found in the fact, that the most influential, wealthy and intelligent citizens take part in their management, and send their own children there to be instructed, in preference to sending them elsewhere.

In the cities in which these schools have been long established, the beneficial results arising from them can be seen by a mere casual observer. In some of them he would be astonished to see no signs of disorderly conduct amongst the youth of the city; indeed he would rarely see them in the streets or public places; he could hear no vulgar or obscene language; he would see that private property was looked upon as sacred, and that quiet and good order reigned throughout the place. He might at first suppose that this state of things was produced by having a very numerous and well ordered police, but when he would contrast the state of these cities with that of European cities, he would be compelled to search for some other more powerful, although more hidden cause for this happy condition. If he should be admitted into their public schools and witness the lessons of morality and virtue there inculcated, and if he could see the thousands and tens of thousands of children in these schools who are being trained up to make virtuous and intelligent citizens, and then consid-

er how many thousands of those occupying distinguished places in these cities, were themselves trained in these same schools, he would no longer wonder at the good order and quiet around him. He would at once see that the boys and girls thus trained and thus educated, formed a standing army far more powerful and effective than all the police officers, and military garrisons, on the earth. The effects of these schools upon the foreign population, is a feature well worthy of our attention. I am convinced that were it not for this system, it would be utterly impossible for us to preserve our government in its present form for a great many years. When we see the vast numbers of ignorant, degraded and vicious foreigners thrown annually upon our shores and crowded into our cities, it might well strike us with alarm. But by the system of Public Schools, this danger is almost entirely removed. The children of these foreigners are placed in these schools, they are there cared for, taught those branches of education which will enable them to attend to some business, and the parents are reached by means of their children. Great numbers of their children are reared up to be useful members of society, becoming producers instead of consumers, defenders of law and order instead of outbreakers and plunderers. And the cost to these cities of educating and preparing these beings for usefulness, is nothing compared with what it would cost them to convict them of crime and punish them, which would necessarily have to be done, were not the other course pursued. And let us not suppose that we have nothing to do with this point; let us not think that because we are situated far inland, we are in no danger from this source. If we entertain any such thoughts, we will find ourselves most woefully deceived. Let once the great system of Rail Roads, now in contemplation, be completed, and you who have not seen their practical effect, will be perfectly astonished at the immense influx of foreign population. Instead of coming here then in small companies, they will flow in upon you by hundreds at a time.

You have but to travel on these roads and observe for yourselves, and you will be satisfied that this is no exaggeration. It will soon become then, to us, a serious question what provision must be made for them. And although the citizens of Nashville have attempted to make ample provision to educate all that may be in her bounds, yet I fear the result in regard to this kind of population. I fear they will be upon us before we are fully able to meet the demands that will be made upon us. We have however no alternative, we are compelled to receive them, and we must educate them in self defense.

I wish it distinctly understood, however, that these Public Institutions not only furnish a good education to the poor, the needy and destitute, not only to the children of foreigners, but the offspring of the most wealthy and influential citizens are educated in the same schools. And why is this the case? This you will perceive was a question of importance to us, and therefore I examined the subject well; I inquired of many, of men who were connected with these schools, and of those who had nothing to do with their management. The answer uniformly was, because all are fully convinced of the great excellence of the Public Schools, because they have a guaranty that the teachers are competent men, and that no superficial work can be done in those institutions. If then such be the character of the Public Schools, are there any private institutions in existence, and if so why have they an existence, and whence do they derive support. The answer was that there were private schools of male a few, of females many —and the latter were well supported. Before I assign the reasons given for the establishment and continuance of these schools, I wish to make two remarks. The first is, that I was aware the greatest difficulty we would have to contend with in founding and building up this scheme, would be found to be just here. The question is constantly asked, will men of wealth and high standing support these schools; can we expect that they will allow their children to be taught at the public expense, and to be placed on a

footing of equality with the children of the poorest and most obscure? Even now, before a plan has been adopted by your body, before you have even selected sites for buildings, we have men who predict its failure; who, if we may be allowed to judge from their language, seem anxious that the effort should fail, and bury its projectors and founders with it. This however is nothing new under the sun. The system has been opposed, most violently opposed, in all places where it now flourishes. Many have been found in every place who labored to strangle it in its infancy, by defaming and degrading it, but it has signally triumphed everywhere, where it has had a fair trial, and certainly its most bitter opponents here would allow it to have that trial, and let it stand or fall by its own merits or demerits. With a fair trial its friends are fully satisfied. There is no fear of the ultimate success of these schools even here; there is no fear but that they will command public favor, and public admiration. The other remark is, that there was no hesitation on the part of any gentleman to whom this question was put in giving a direct answer, and the reasons assigned by different individuals, were different—proving conclusively, that there were many causes for the existence of private schools, and yet none of them injurious to the character of the Public Institutions.

The reasons assigned for the support that private male schools obtained were: 1st, that there were some parents warmly attached to the principals of these schools, who had been engaged for many years in the profession, and were either unable or unwilling to be connected with the Public Schools in that capacity, and those parents on account of personal attachment, continued to send their sons to them. 2nd, many persons who do not reside in the cities, prefer sending their sons to those schools in them, not being able to get them into the Public Schools. 3rd, some must necessarily become dissatisfied with the public institutions, for there are some individuals so constituted that they are never satisfied with any thing. The last reason I shall assign is the most weighty, and yet is a high

commendation on the public school. There are some parents who are indulgent towards their children, who cannot bear that they should be placed under strict discipline, and be forced to go through the course prescribed in the Public Schools, so perfectly and thoroughly as they would there be compelled to do, or to lose cast. These men will not send their sons to these institutions, but vainly hope to raise them to the same platform by a shorter and less laborious route. This class is tolerably numerous. It will be seen that not one single reason given here, is derogatory to the character of the public schools, and that the last one is highly honorable to them. Any one who had witnessed the great degree of scholarship exhibited by the boys in the Latin and English High Schools there, would be satisfied that those schools would by no means suit the indolent, the lazy or the superficial. In reference to the establishment of female schools by private individuals, my examination was not so satisfactory, I wish to be perfectly candid on this subject, I wish you to know the exact state of the case, it is due to you and to our citizens that all these matters should be fairly discussed. There are then many large and flourishing female schools in many of these cities, in which the Public Schools exist. Great numbers of parents of wealth and high standing have their daughters educated entirely at the Public Schools, yet there are others who will not send theirs to these schools when they get beyond the age of 10 or 12 years. The reasons in this case are widely different from those in the other. This is the result of pride and aristocratic feeling in a great measure, which have their influence every where. The very wealthy there and the very exclusive classes, do not as a general thing send their daughters to the Public Schools after they have arrived at a certain age; before that almost all of them are found in the Public Institutions. With the exception of these classes, all are educated in the Public Female Schools. It is however a singular fact and worthy of remark, that there is in the city of Boston, a gentleman who has a very large and prosperous

female school of his own, and yet is a member of the Grammar School Board, and seems to take as deep an interest in the success and prosperity of the Public Schools, as any other member of the Board, and indeed speaks in as high terms of them.

The effect of the Public Schools, however, upon these private institutions has been very salutary, in as much as it has forced them to elevate the standard of education, and to do the work in a more thorough manner. This will be seen to be a natural result, for if the private schools should sink very far below the standard of the Public Schools, they would necessarily go down. We need not hope here for any different state of things, however excellent our Public Schools may become, nor do I think that it would be at all desirable. There is not necessarily any clashing of interests here, and both institutions may exist and be mutually beneficial.

It may be profitable here to give a few reasons to prove that Public Schools can be made from the nature of the case, superior to private schools. I consider this point as a very important one for us, as it is only on the ground of the superior advantages of these public institutions that we could hope for the support of all classes of our community. In the first place then, it is easily seen by all, that it is much more easy for the public to erect buildings suitable for schools, and to furnish them with all necessary furniture and apparatus, than it is for an individual, so to do. This will be more apparent when I state here, that many of the School Houses in the East, with the sites upon which they stand, have cost not less than $50,000 to $70,000. All men know the great advantage of having buildings exactly suited to the business to be carried on in them. This, then, of itself is no small advantage. The apparatus necessary, I would say, indispensably necessary for an English or Latin High School, is also costly; and few private individuals can afford to purchase it. In addition to this, no one is admitted as a teacher in a public school, until he is subjected to a rigid examination, not

only on the sciences he is expected to teach, but also on the art of teaching itself. He must necessarily be a man of fine moral character, and fully able to control himself; hence the community have the greatest surety that in these schools are found the most experienced and skillful teachers. A point of vital importance to all. The teachers are able to perform better work in these institutions than they could be expected to do elsewhere,—they are not under the influence of parents at all—they feel themselves, in one sense, independent; and are at liberty to pursue that course which their own judgment dictates to be the best to secure the end in view. Their great object, indeed I may say their whole aim, is to prove their skill and fidelity by making the very best of scholars. They feel if they can do this, if they can arouse mind to action, direct it properly, develop its powers, and train it thoroughly,—if they can control the passions, and subdue the temper, and mould the character of those committed to their care, they have done their whole duty, and their reward is sure, their place is certain. Again: the government in these schools is more uniform, and the course of instruction the same. The government not being given up to the whims of teachers, but general rules being fixed by a higher power, the course of instruction is also laid down by the same power, and not to be changed except by that power. Teachers are not here burdened with teaching all branches of an education. Each one has his own department, and in this he certainly can become better and better skilled every year. On this system there is not the slightest inducement to exercise partiality for one over another. All stand on the same footing. Every one is estimated by his individual merits. An old and experienced teacher of one of these schools in Boston remarked, that Public Schools, properly conducted, present to us the only model of true Republicanism, that is to be found in the world. The son of the poorest and most obscure individual receives here as much attention and regard, as the son of the richest and most powerful. And if the poor boy by his labor and applica-

tion becomes the best scholar, he is instantly preferred to the other. He went on to say that he would not undertake to train pupils as thoroughly, and produce as good scholars, under any other circumstances, for although we may all boast of independence of thought and action, yet we are all more or less influenced by the peculiar position we occupy, particularly when we feel that our own support and that of others dependent on us, rests upon the whims and fancies of individuals.

I will here relate a case that has an immediate connexion with this point. A gentleman dissatisfied with the course of instruction as laid down, applied to the Principal of the Latin High School in Boston to permit his son to omit one single branch of study, as he was under the impression that it required too much labor, and was not of any real practical use. The principal informed him that he himself had no power over that matter, that if the Board of Education should direct him so to do, he would obey them. The Board however was far from granting any such request, and the gentleman found himself under the necessity of letting his son go through the usual course or of removing him from the school. Of the two alternatives, he preferred the former. Suppose such a case had occurred with a private teacher, under certain circumstances, we can all readily say, what would have been the result, and by the omission of one branch of a science, we can easily foresee what would have been the effect upon the pupil in that science, and farther still, if difficulty in acquiring a knowledge of a science was a good reason for omitting it, then every science would have to be omitted.

I mention above that in these schools the sons of the rich and the poor, of the powerful and of the weak, stood upon the same footing; and that it not unfrequently happened that the poor boy was more honored than the rich one. The effect of this state of things is not to produce any dislike on the part of the rich towards the poor. Many facts of very interesting nature were related to me to show what a happy influence was often times exerted by this

mingling of the classes together. One of these I beg leave here to repeat, even at the risk of being accused of tediousness. "Two boys, one the son of a very rich man and the other the son of a poor widow, were in the same class and occupied the same desk. They were very warm friends notwithstanding the fact that the poor boy was the better scholar, and in their contention for prizes uniformly came off victor. At one time the widow became quite ill, and, owing to her extreme poverty, was unable to procure those little attentions and comforts so necessary to the sick. The situation of the mother produced a very serious effect upon the son. He became unable to pursue his studies with that avidity and eagerness which he had before shown, and of course this excited curiosity on the part of his young friend to learn the cause of the sudden change. As soon as he became aware of the state of the case, he informed his mother, and she immediately supplied all things necessary to make the widow comfortable, and restore her health, without subjecting her to the mortification of seeking relief from the public. Instances of similar character occur frequently, and all can see without a word more upon the subject, the happy effects produced by this state of things."

To sum up in a few words the advantages of the Public over Private Schools permit me to repeat:

1st. Buildings perfectly adapted to schools can be erected by the public. These buildings can be furnished in better style, with all necessary furniture and apparatus. Teachers of the highest qualification can be procured always. Better work can be demanded of them, because they will be independent of the influence of parents, and because they will be compelled to teach a fewer number of sciences.

And lastly: Public Schools can be subjected to a much more rigid examination than any private schools can possibly be.

Having dwelt long enough upon these general topics, I will proceed now to that which more immediately inter-

ests this Board and the community at large, to wit: The general organization of these schools, the course of studies pursued in them, the discipline, and the probable effect of their establishment in our city.

In entering upon this branch of my subject I beg leave to say, that although I admire the organization of the Public Schools in Providence, Philadelphia and Baltimore, and although I am fully satisfied of the excellent results in each one of those cities, yet from the fact that the schools of Boston are on all hands confessed to be equal, if not superior to any in the Union, and that I myself was better pleased with their system, I shall confine myself to describing the organization of the Schools of Boston, the course of study prescribed there and recommend the adoption by this Board of a plan in some respects similar, modified only by the peculiar circumstances surrounding us. I would remark, however, that the schools in all these cities are in some respects similar, and we could not go far astray in making ours correspond to any one of them.

In Boston there is a Board composed of men elected by the people, called the Grammar School Board. This Board has the power of electing teachers, fixing their salaries, adopting the course of studies to be pursued in each Division of the Schools, prescribing the text books to be used, of examining the pupils quarterly, and publishing the result of that examination. They are also empowered to dismiss teachers that are found to be incompetent, or neglectful of their duties, or guilty of cruelty to pupils. It is made their duty to have a general care of the buildings, to recommend to the Aldermen and Common Council of the city to make appropriations for repairs, for additional furniture or apparatus, or for new buildings. I find the schools are entirely under their control, and every thing connected with these institutions, except they have no power to appropriate any moneys from the public treasury. This belongs exclusively to the corporate authorities, as it ought of right to do. In addition to this the Grammar School Board elects annually what is called a Pri

mary School Board. This Board takes charge, particularly, of the Primary Schools, examining these institutions quarterly, and reporting to the Grammar School Board. This latter Board is responsible to the former, and only recommends measures for their adoption. There is another office connected now with these schools called Superintendent of Public Schools. His duties are varied and laborious. It is made his duty daily to examine the pupils of the schools, confer with the teachers, advise with them in reference to their mode of teaching, and make any suggestions to them that he may deem beneficial to the teachers and pupils. He is under the control of the Grammar School Board, makes his reports to that body, and is directed by them to perform any other duty connected with his office. This is what they term the organization of the Public School System.

I would recommend to this Board the creation by law of a Grammar School Board, to be composed of a limited number of men, to be chosen by the people, at the same time that they elect the Mayor and Aldermen; also, that this Board elects annually a Superintendent of Public Schools, whose duties shall be clearly defined, and who shall be under the direction of the Grammar School Board. This Grammar School Board, clothed by law with the powers specified above, together with the Superintendent, will be amply sufficient for all present purposes.

The schools themselves are divided into Primary, Grammar and High Schools. Some add Intermediate Schools, occupying a middle place between the Primary and Grammar Schools. Of these I will speak in another place. In several cities we find Normal Schools existing, which are considered indispensably necessary to complete the system. This is undoubtedly true. We will be compelled after a time to train our own teachers, but for the present I cannot recommend to you the establishment of these schools. We must not attempt too much at once, for fear we fail in doing any thing at all.

The Primary Schools are intended for all children be-

tween the ages of four and eight years. These little ones assemble in the rooms appropriated to their use, properly seated, well ventilated, and large enough to accommodate from 55 to 60 pupils. Experience has proved that one teacher can properly instruct that number, all being nearly of the same age, and very little difference in their attainments. Here they are taught to read well, to spell accurately, and are instructed in mental Arithmetic, vocal music, and the simple elements of drawing. They are also instructed in practical Arithmetic, so far as through the four fundamental rules. But the greatest good effected by these Primary Schools is, that they train children to obedience to parents and teachers, to love order and quiet. Good moral instruction is here given to the very young. Virtuous conduct commended and rewarded, vice frowned upon and punished. Children who passed through these schools with credit, have an excellent foundation to build upon when they enter the Grammar School. Primary Schools are divided into a few classes, according to advancement, and every year one class passes from the Primary to the Grammar School.

Before I describe the Grammar School, I wish to say one word with regard to Intermediate Schools. These in Boston are essentially the same as the Primary, the only difference being, in the fact, that the children composing those schools are over eight years of age. The branches taught in them are the same as those taught in the Primary, but it frequently happens that parents move into a city, and have children over that age, who are entirely ignorant, and provision must be made for them some where. These boys and girls are too old for the Primary Schools, and are by no means qualified to enter the Grammar Schools, and hence the establishment of the Intermediate Schools. It is very certain we will be obliged to establish one or two of these schools in our place. I will remark, however, that in some cities, these schools are of a different character, and that pupils pass from the Primary into the Intermediate, and from then into the Grammar

Schools, but I see no necessity for this arrangement, and, indeed, no possible advantage to be gained by it.

We pass then into the Grammar School. This school is divided into various classes under different instructors; those in the lowest class are composed of pupils from the Primary and Intermediate, who have gone through the course prescribed there, have been examined by the Board, and pronounced qualified to enter the higher department. The highest class is composed of those who are candidates for admission into the High School, either the Latin High School or the English High School, according to the wishes of the parents. Also, of those who complete their course of instruction here altogether, and who go thence to learning some trade, or to being engaged in some mercantile business. The branches taught in the Grammar Schools are English Grammar, including Composition, Geography, including Map drawing and the use of the Globes, History, Arithmetic, Algebra, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Vocal Music; and in the Female Department Instrumental Music. Drawing is also an important branch. I might mention several other things taught here, but these are the chief branches and the most essential. The course in these sciences is extensive and very thorough.

The next schools that we enter are the English and Latin High Schools. These schools afford the means of a very extensive and thorough education in Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, French and Spanish Languages, together with the Latin and Greek Languages, and the branches of learning necessarily connected with them. They are, as I have hinted above, distinct schools, a pupil does not necessarily have to pass through the one to be admitted to the other.

You have now before you the organization of the schools, the divisions that are made, the course of instruction adopted in them. You will see at a glance that the provisions made for education in these cities are on a noble scale, of the most liberal kind. It remains for me to say a

few words with respect to the discipline kept up in them, and the probable effect of their establishment in our city.

The pupils of these schools are trained to keep perfect order and quiet; they are governed by kindness, yet the government is firm and uniform. No cruelty is at any time allowed, and no favoritism of any sort. In the Male Schools, the rod is sometimes resorted to, but not often. If boys or girls are found to be ungovernable and not willing to submit to law at all, they are necessarily expelled from the school. This, however, is of very rare occurrence. The system of Medals and Prizes, and what they call Diplomas, which are mere tokens of approbation, given publicly at the end of each term, is found to be a powerful incentive to labor, and good deportment. But I think the great interest that parents themselves, and citizens generally, take in these schools, makes them what they are. All persons visit them at any time and at all times, when in session. And at examinations and exhibitions of these schools, their halls are crowded with visitors. We can, beyond all doubt, excite as much interest in our citizens, and if so, we can have schools in every respect equal to theirs.

As it regards the effect their establishment may produce upon the general interests of the city, I do not think it necessary to say much. If, however, it is true, that these schools have increased rents, and have induced men of property to build houses for the accommodation of renters; if they have debarred mechanics and other worthy citizens from removing from cities; and if these things have been found to be true, and even noticed in cities containing from 150,000 to 400,000 inhabitants, what do you suppose will be the result here in our small city, where there is so much ground still unimproved? And yet I was assured by a gentleman in Philadelphia, that many worthy men had told him that they would remove from that city, were it not for the fear of ruining their children because of a want of means to educate them in the West. This single

remark, however, is enough for all thinking men on this subject.

One point still remains for me to speak of in connexion with Public Instruction, and a very important one it is for us to know, and that is what these schools will cost the city per annum.

The cost per pupil varies very much in different cities. In Boston the cost per pupil is from ten to twelve dollars per annum, and in some instances more than that, even reaching as high as fifteen dollars. In Providence it averages a little over six dollars per pupil. In Philadelphia between seven and eight dollars. Boston is perhaps the highest and Providence as low as any other. In Boston they are very liberal in point of salaries, the citizens very properly think that they cannot secure the services of able and experienced teachers without giving high salaries, and they will have the very best teachers that can be procured. I have estimated our pupils at 1000, and the cost per pupil to be ten dollars per annum, so that the present expense will not be over $10,000 per annum. We have a fund sufficiently large to cover this expense, when once we get the buildings erected and furnished.

I would recommend, then, to this Board the appointment of a Building Committee, three of their own number, who should immediately select a site for a School House, adopt a plan for the building, and at once enter into contract with mechanics to execute the work. I urge upon them the necessity of erecting at present but one fine building capable of accommodating between seven and eight hundred pupils, furnished with all things necessary for a school. This building should be so arranged as to be suited for a Grammar and High School, for both sexes. It can be so built as to have every advantage of two separate houses. The entrance for males and females entirely distinct, the grounds appropriated to each separate. I advise this plan simply because we are not at present able to erect two of these houses, and I am sure I can satisfy any one that feels an interest in the subject, that this one build-

ing will secure every thing desired for the two sexes. In addition to this, I advise the building or renting, (probably the latter will be the cheaper,) of four houses, suitable for the Primary Schools, in convenient parts of the city, for the benefit of small children.

In respect to the main building recommended here, I would remark, that with some little hesitancy I procured a draft of one that I thought best suited for that purpose, which plan I hope the Committee may be as well pleased with as myself, and consequently will adopt. But whatever may be the plan, by all means have the building so constructed that you will never wish to have it changed. One of the greatest errors committed by us in times past is, that we have always commenced things on too small a scale, only looking to the present state of our city, instead of its future greatness.

I will again recapitulate, in few words, the recommendations contained in this report. 1st. The creation by law of a Board, to be called the Grammar School Board, to be composed of men elected by the people, whose duty it shall be to attend to the entire school interest, having all powers in the matter save the appropriation of moneys. The creation of the office of Superintendent of Public Schools, the officer to have his salary fixed by this Board, and his duties clearly defined. The appointment of a Building Committee, whose duty has been already specified. This plan, it will be seen, if carried out, will secure to us the advantages of these schools in the short space of twelve months from this time, or at farthest by the 1st of January, 1854.

I cannot close this long, and, I fear, tedious report without repeating to you a warning often given to me by a very intelligent gentleman in Baltimore, who is the main prop of the whole system in that city, and who feels a deep interest in the success of the scheme:—"Beware how you begin the system. Be sure you begin right. Spare no pains or expense to put your schools on the proper basis at first. It is much easier to put things right at first, than

to get them right when once begun wrong. Be liberal in your views, aim high—and success is sure." I understood him to mean that we should have our buildings of the best kind, well furnished, and rendered attractive by all things around and in them; that we should employ the very best teachers; adopt a liberal plan of education; pass rigid rules for the government of these schools; enforce strict discipline; demand a high degree of scholarship, and under no circumstances permit any one to pass from an inferior to a superior class until perfectly prepared to do it.

If this course be adopted and adhered to, I am certain that in a short time, you will find all opposition withdrawn, you will find, then, your Public Schools commanding the admiration of your own citizens, and alluring persons from a distance to come here to enjoy the benefits of these institutions.

It will be observed that according to the plan I have recommended, the success of these schools will depend mainly on the action of the Superintendent and Board of Education. It is indispensably necessary that the men composing this board, should be men of high intellectual culture, and well acquainted with the wants of the community. They will require great firmness and determination in the beginning, and continued operations, of these schools. For having once fixed the course of study for each department, and what shall be required of pupils to allow them to pass from a lower to a higher class, they will find it very difficult to resist the entreaties of parents and pupils, to permit the violation of the rule that may be adopted, and if they once suffer themselves to be influenced in this point, there is an end at once to all perfection, and of consequence, the schools lose character and popularity. I consider this point one of the most important connected with the system. The very thorough education acquired at these schools is the only passport to public favor, and if they fail in this vital particular, the whole system is destroyed. I notice in some of the cities where these schools exist, it is not a very unusual thing for one

half of those applying for admission into a High School to be rejected; and let it be remembered, that the rejection is not upon the ground of ignorance of the sciences required, but that those applying for this favor, are not perfectly familiar with them, and consequently they would not be able to perform the work required in the High School.

There is a very wide difference between being able with great difficulty to do a thing, and doing it with ease and celerity. All men who are practical Teachers are aware of this, and how much a pupil's advancement in knowledge is retarded for want of a perfect acquaintance with the principles of the science he may be studying. I will say again that here lies the danger to our system, and we must be on our guard more especially at the beginning of this great system. The course will no doubt produce at first great dissatisfaction, and sore disappointment, for it is very probable that many who might apply for admission to the High, would be found unfit to enter the 2nd or 3rd division of the Grammar School, and probably some might ever be denied admission into a Grammar School at all.

Many will perhaps look for a perfect revolution in the whole educational system of our country here at once; these will be sadly mistaken. Before we can properly estimate the great advantages of this system, we must have time at least to pass pupils through the Primary and Grammar Schools, and prepare them for the High Schools, and then it will be proper for us to expect to see all admitted there, of the character we would desire. I have travelled out of my road to make these remarks, because I deem them of great importance to your body, but more especially to the community.

One suggestion more, and I am done. In the city of Boston it is customary to give names to their schools, and we find almost every school bearing the name of some one of their great and distinguished men, men who occupied during their lives high places, and were distinguished for their patriotism, their philanthrophy and liberality.

Hence we hear of the Adams School, the Bigelow, Bowdoin, Boylston, Brimmer, Eliot, Endicott, Franklin, Chapman, Hancock, Quincy, Winthrop Schools, and many, very many others. It struck me that we had many excellent men in our midst, men too of ample means, whose names should be identified with our city, and should be handed down to posterity with honor. If, then, some of these noble men would step forward and give substantial aid in the establishment of these schools, I for one would vote to have their names associated with our Public Schools, engraved on the walls, and in the hearts of our citizens. And if this can be done, I would then recommend the erection of two large and commodious buildings, one for males and the other for females, which circumstance would of itself enable us to begin on a better scale, and to assume from the start a more commanding position. Certain am I that we ought to be able to find four men in our City of Rocks who would contribute from $10 to $20,000 each to aid in this great enterprize. And there is as little doubt in my mind that they would do it if they could foresee the results that would follow from their liberality, if they could know that many thousands of our race would be saved from infamy and disgrace, and elevated in the scale of being, would be made useful and valuable citizens, increasing the wealth and honor of our city, and becoming themselves aiders in this same noble undertaking.

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